

PAX ANTARCTICA: The IPF will be responsible for the management, maintenance, supervision and security of scientific missions at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.

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The Belgian State and the International Polar Foundation reach an agreement on the management of Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.

Brussels, Belgium, 30 June 2017

Belgian Secretary of State for Science, Mme Zuhail Demir, and Alain Hubert, Founder and President of the International Polar Foundation, hosted a Press conference on Friday, 30 June 2017, to publicly announce a new agreement regarding the management and operations of the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica, the world's first ever “zero emission” research station.

The agreement follows three months of intense negotiations between the the Belgian State and the International Polar Foundation aimed at resolving disagreements over the management of the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica which have been going on since 2015. The signing of the new agreement is a positive step forward in re-establishing the public-private partnership that led to the environmentally friendly research station being built.

Key outcomes of the new agreement:

- The International Polar Foundation has made a full donation of the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica to the Belgian State, making the Belgian state the sole owner of the research station (the International Polar Foundation has therefore relinquished its ownership of the station, as initially intended under the Convention signed with the Belgian State in 2007).
- The International Polar Foundation will be responsible for the management, maintenance, supervision and security of scientific missions undertaken at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica for the next six years. This partnership agreement has the potential to be extended for three additional years. All pending legal proceedings between the the Belgian State and the International Polar Foundation have been terminated.
- All previous agreements and conventions between the the Belgian State and the International Polar Foundation will be annulled, including the Partnership Convention of 2007, the original act of donation from the International Polar Foundation to the Belgian State (the Partnership Protocol) of 2010, and the Belgian Law of 24 July 2008, all of which had previously set out the terms and conditions of ownership and operation of the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.
- An international non-profit organisation comprised of members from the public sector and controlled by the Belgian State will replace the existing public private partnership vehicle called the Polar Secretariat, which has until now been responsible for managing the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.
- A scientific committee (composed of scientists from the Belgian Antarctic Research Committee and Belgian institutions) will be set up under the new international non-profit organisation to advise on scientific research undertaken at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.

Thanks to the renewed trust and cooperation that has been forged between the two parties with this new agreement, Belgium will once again be fully active in international collaborative scientific research in Antarctica.

"We have pressed the 'reset' button so we can start on a blank page. Good agreements and good discussions make good friends. I do not look to the past, but to the future, and the future is scientific research." Zuhal Demir, Belgian Secretary of State for Science Policy.

"Our integrity was restored by justice. Having a minister with a sense of the rule of law is fundamental to a democracy for the general good. We now have a minister who shows true leadership!" Alain Hubert, Founder and President, International Polar Foundation.

Since its inauguration during the International Polar Year 2007-2009, the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica research station has served as a unique research platform allowing scientists from over a dozen nations to significantly reduce their carbon footprint while conducting research in Antarctica - a region critical for the study and improved understanding of climate change.

Princess Elizabeth Antarctica research station:

The International Polar Foundation and its private partners conceived of and built the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica (PEA). Located in the Dronning Maud Land region of East Antarctica, it is the first polar research station designed to run entirely on renewable energy sources (wind and solar). The station has been operational since the 2008-09 Antarctic research season

www.antarcticstation.org

About Alain Hubert and the International Polar Foundation:

Alain Hubert, Founder and President of the International Polar Foundation, is a civil engineer by training and certified mountain guide (UIAGM), entrepreneur, and polar explorer. Alain founded The International Polar Foundation in 2002 in order to support polar scientific research for the advancement of knowledge, the promotion of informed action on climate change, and the development of a sustainable society.

www.polarfoundation.org

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